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THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

THE CORNERS OF A ROOM.

BY EDWARD LEE YOUNG.



FOR generations furniture manufacturers and their designers have been creating interior furnishings, all of which are designed to embellish either the center or the side walls of an apartment; but the idea of devising furnishings for the vacant corners of the room has not yet fully taken hold of the manufacturing mind.

While the center of the floor has been crowded with furniture, the corners of the room have remained ut-

terly neglected, and these vacant spaces stare at the inmates of an apartment with a repellent emptiness, instead of attracting one with the solace of cosy comfort.

Take, for example, the dining-room, which it is customary for everyone to consider as the easiest room to furnish. The table, with four, six or a dozen chairs, and the sideboard furnishes the room—this is the orthodox idea. The mantel is usually placed on the narrowest way of the room, and it is everywhere considered proper to place the sideboard directly opposite to this, making the room at least two feet narrower, where we can least spare space.

Almost every dining-room has a space in each corner running at least three feet from the corner on each wall. This is the space we desire to furnish most of all, and in conjunction with the present article, I submit illustrations of a cosy corner, wardrobe, desk and sideboard, which I consider are very suitable methods of decorating corner spaces. Fig. 1 shows a corner sideboard, and as this will require something to balance it, I suggest Fig. 2, which represents a corner divan, for the other nearest corner, which would be an effective furnishing.

Take, again, the case of a bedroom, where the wardrobe usually forms part of the furniture, and we all know how difficult it is to find space to center it, for the one best place for the wardrobe is, unfortunately, the one for the bedstead. The wardrobe usually goes into a corner, but does not fill it. It

extends awkwardly on one side or another, and is not using all the room around it to the best advantage. I have sketched in Fig. 3 a corner wardrobe, to show that one may not only have all the space for hanging garments behind the doors, but the doors themselves may be made with mirrors; and by hanging them at certain angles, the figure can be displayed back, front, or otherwise. Fig. 4 is a corner escritoire that might fill a vacant corner in a bedroom very pleasantly.

These examples are but a few of the many ways of overcoming the neglected corners of a room. In another article I hope to illustrate an artistic method of furnishing the neglected corner of the mantel-piece, or chimney breast, a portion of the room that offers great possibilities to the designer.

HOUSE DECORATION FOR WOMEN.

BY AGNES GARRETT.

I HAVE been asked to write a short article upon the subject of house decoration as a suitable employment for women. I must confess that I begin to feel that enough has already

been written upon this and similar subjects, and that what is wanted now is that no more shall be written, but that much more shall be done by women to help themselves. I am, however, conscious that my opinion upon this matter is not of so much value as that of the editor of THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER; that I perhaps cannot see so clearly as he does of what great importance it is that remunerative means of livelihood should be constantly pressed upon the attention of women of all ages, and of all classes. I am therefore willing to try and write down a few of the ideas on this subject which thirteen years of work have taught me in the hope that they may be of use to other women who wish to undertake the same business.

In the first place I would impress upon my readers that in order to be successful as a decorator, a woman must undertake the business seriously, and time and patience must be devoted to learning its various branches thoroughly. Too many young ladies think that the main business of house decoration consists in painting *Gloire de Dijon* roses

upon the panels of a door. This is very much the same as if a dressmaker thought to fit herself for her business by learning embroidery; or an architect contented himself with designing a pediment. What women must require as a class is the sound business training and habits of continuous effort

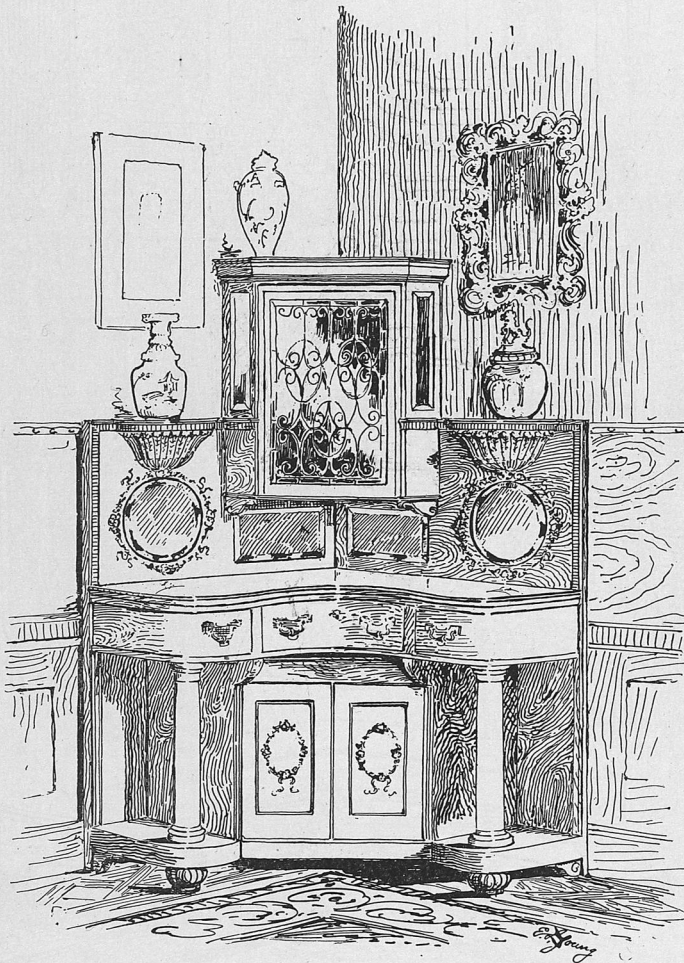


FIG. 1.—A CORNER SIDBOARD, DESIGNED BY EDWARD LEE YOUNG.

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which for the carrying on of any business are imperative necessities. To that, if they wish to become house decorators, must be added a knowledge of drawing, a sense of proportion, and of the fitness of things, a cultivated eye for color,

woman of fair average ability. She must, however, devote time to it; she must be willing to serve an apprenticeship to learn her trade, and to undergo all the drudgery connected with it, exactly as her brother would do in an architect's office

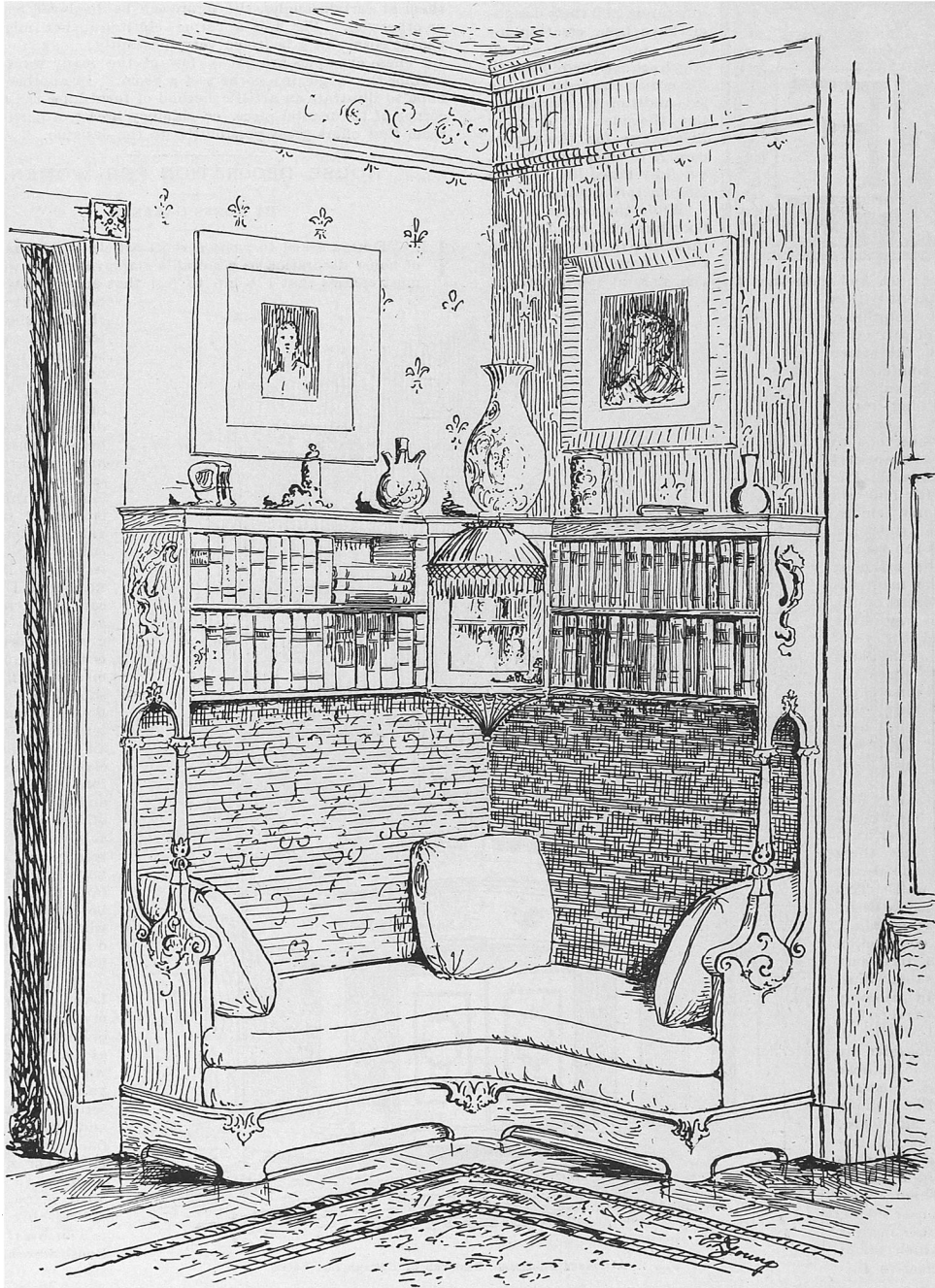


FIG. 2.—A CORNER DIVAN, DESIGNED BY EDWARD LEE YOUNG.

a knowledge of materials, and last but not least a large stock of patience. Now these are qualities which can only be acquired gradually, but most of them *can* be acquired by a

Perhaps it will be well to divide what I have to say into two heads. 1st. The reasons why I believe house decoration to be a suitable business for women; and 2nd. The best way to

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get the training necessary for it. One of the most important of the reasons why house decoration is a suitable business for women is that to be thoroughly successful (from an artistic and not from a mercenary point of view) it is a business that should never be too large. Directly the personal influence of

to criticism, and it is too long a question to be gone into fully here, but I am convinced that it is true, and I think that those who will give the subject a little consideration will agree with me. It is the importance of this (which to me seems the heart and soul of the business) that inclines me to distrust all large



FIG. 3.—A CORNER WARDROBE, DESIGNED BY EDWARD LEE YOUNG.

the head of the firm is lost so soon does the work lose its individuality and interest. In a humble way, house decoration is one of the fine arts; and each room that is turned out by any house decorator is, or ought to be interesting as an expression of his or her individuality. This will perhaps at first seem open

schemes of house decoration by co-operative companies and the like. Keeping the business small, and as it were personal, will always prevent large fortunes being made at it, and it will, in consequence, I think, be intrusted more and more to women.

The next reason is the importance which all small details

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assume in internal decoration. A molding which looks very fine on an outside wall would be quite inadmissible inside a room; and this sense of proportion and of fitness a woman seems instinctively to feel more quickly than a man. A woman has been trained from her childhood to notice the effect of small and apparently trivial details, and to note how and in what position they assume the most importance. All this unconscious training is most valuable to her if she becomes a House Decorator. And what is true of form is equally true with regard to color. Until one has learnt by experience of what great importance variations of color are, it is almost impossible properly to estimate their value.

The last reason I shall give why I think house decoration is a suitable business for women is that, in the majority of American houses, homeliness is one of the charms we most prize, and this air of homeliness and comfort a woman is,

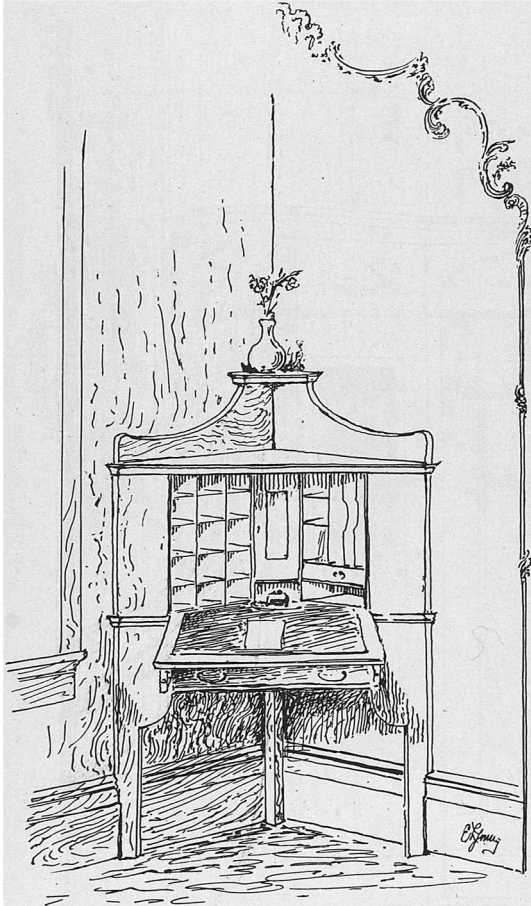


FIG. 4.—CORNER ESCRIPTOIRE, DESIGNED BY EDWARD LEE YOUNG.

generally speaking, particularly well calculated to give. It is not of course possible to lay down a hard and fast rule upon such a matter, but I think it will be generally admitted that the above statement is true. I hope the few points I have touched upon will at any rate have convinced my readers that house decoration is a business which is in many respects particularly well suited to women, and that women are well suited to it.

It therefore only remains for me to point out how a woman should set about training for such a business. So far as I know there is no way of learning the business in all its branches except by going through a term of apprenticeship in a house

of business. The term of apprenticeship would vary from three to five years, as agreed to between the firm and the pupil.

In conclusion, I would add that to any one whose heart is in the work the life is an exceedingly happy and, I think, a useful one. There can be no doubt also that it is an opening for providing a really good livelihood for many more women than are at present engaged in it. From my experience as a decorator I believe that in most of the large towns a good business might very quickly be made by a firm of women decorators who were good women of business and competent to carry out the work in all its branches. The work is singularly varied and so full of general interest that it adds a zest to most of the enjoyments of life. It brings one into contact with many men and many minds, and one finds kind feeling and sympathy in many, and sometimes in unexpected, quarters. Not the least pleasant part of it is the friendship which an intimate acquaintance with the workmen brings—a friendship which I, for one, shall always regard as one of the brightest and happiest experiences of my life.

It is the irregularity of Chinese fretwork that seems to win it favor. The world is tired of the Renaissance order of completeness, and cast-iron perfection. In Shanghai the designer frolics, and that reminds one that the newest thing in "alarm beds" is Chinese, also. A person who claims to be truthful, claims also to have tried it. He says he ran across the idea in a Chinese city. The bed was set for six in the morning, and at that hour a set of rollers under it began a lively message business beneath the mattress. In a moment he was up and out on the floor, and not too soon, for as he alighted on the matting the bed ceased to undulate like a ship in a chop sea, and firmly ascended, slamming together like the shutting of a door. It appeared to the observer that if he had been one degree less lively, he would have been smothered gracefully. It does not yet appear whether the "alarm bed" is among the fetching fashions to be borrowed this winter from the Chinese.

We all know the delight of a closet, and, alas, we know, too, the misery of doing without, so that a plan for devising the luxury can hardly come amiss. In almost all rooms the corners are practically waste space; they fill no need and supply no want, yet they are there, and they might be turned to good account. Such a simple device as fastening a strip of Japanese diagonally from wall to wall makes the foundation of a most convenient closet. It is first attached in a perfectly secure manner a little below the ceiling; then below it again is placed a brass rod, and from this hangs a pair of heavy curtains. The space can be as small or as large as the size of the room makes advisable, but it will in all cases give a triangular closet, which will not only be of service, but which will add to the effect of the room. Hooks, which can be purchased already attached to a neat boarding, can be hung within the space, and a shelf can fill the upper part of it, or, if preferred, shelves can fill the entire space.

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